

Testimony by Erika Lynn Kapustinski
Concerning Bill SB274 - An Act Concerning Funding for Planned Parenthood and other
Family Planning Clinics

My name is Erika Lynn Kapustinski and I am 31 years old. I am married with 5 children. When I found out about this bill, I knew that I had to somehow get involved. I don't work in politics and I don't work at a place where maybe what I write could help encourage your decision, but I do come from a place where I have a personal story that I felt needed to be shared with you all. It is a matter that is close to my heart and one which I know that I need to speak about.

I understand that this bill is concerning funding to Planned Parenthood of Southern New England to replace the federal Title X funding which PPSNE chose not to accept due to enforcement of federal regulations related to abortion services. This means that our taxpayer funds will go to perform abortion procedures and I am against this in every way, especially because it comes from such a personal place for myself and my story.

On May 6th of 2015 I walked into Planned Parenthood in Bridgeport, Connecticut. I had never been to one before that day, but I was facing a crisis pregnancy after I had an affair in my previous marriage. About a week prior to going to Planned Parenthood I found out that I was pregnant. I immediately told the father of the baby who pressured me to have an abortion. He did not want anyone to know that I was pregnant and told me he didn't want the baby and didn't want me. I told him that I didn't want to have an abortion. It was in that moment that I knew I had a choice to make and I felt alone, scared, hopeless, helpless, insecure, fearful, and afraid to tell anyone what was going on and so with a simple phone call to Planned Parenthood, I made an appointment to have an abortion the following day. I went in on May 6th, 2015 and they brought me into a room for an ultrasound where I was not allowed to look at the screen and they turned off the monitors so that I could not hear the heartbeat. All they said was, "There is a heartbeat so you are in fact pregnant." Then they brought me into a room to watch a video about the abortion pill. I had no idea what that even meant. No one counseled me, no one talked to me. I was alone in that clinic and not even wanting to be there, but felt there was no other way to do this. After the video was over, I walked up to the front desk where the nurse gave me a pill and told me to take it. So I did and she never once explained what it was. Then she gave me a paper bag of a couple of other pills and explained when I had to take those. I walked out of the clinic that day completely unaware of what would take place next. I remember thinking to myself, "Okay, so this is just a pill? I guess that's okay." It was not until the next day when everything in my life would change and I wouldn't even realize just how drastically it would until years later.

The next day, I took the other pills that the nurse from Planned Parenthood had told me to take. It was within a few hours that I began to feel nauseous, started to throw up, began having immense abdominal pain and I started to cry because it was in that moment that I

realized what was going on and I could not take it back. I was horrified. I went into my bathroom, locked the door and began to weep. I sat down on my toilet in the most horrible pain, thinking I would die right there. A few moments later, I was bleeding quite heavily and when I stood up, I saw this tiny, tiny baby in my toilet. I was only just about 7 weeks along at that time, but the baby was there and even though it was so small, I knew that the baby had a heartbeat, which meant it was alive, and now I was looking at my baby in my toilet, dead, because I chose to go to Planned Parenthood and take these pills in which I had no idea what was going to happen.

I knew I had to move on with my life. As soon as I flushed that toilet, I felt numb. I didn't realize at the time just how numb I really felt, but I began to feel even more depressed than I already had. I was barely able to function and I couldn't take care of the 4 kids that I had at home. I felt undeserving to be a Mom because of what I had done. I felt even more alone, scared and hopeless following that abortion. Deciding to have that abortion did not take away the pain of the situation, it only added to the pain. My life began to quickly spiral out of control in the weeks following that abortion and I could not take facing the pain any longer. I left my house three weeks later and moved in with a new guy friend of mine. I felt I had nowhere to go and no one to talk to and I just wanted to move on with my life. Three months following that, I found out that I was again, pregnant. This time, I felt happy. I felt happy because I viewed that pregnancy as a fresh start for me. In the next several weeks following finding out that I was pregnant, I began to see some alarming things about the man that I was living with and I chose to move out and move in with family. He began to stalk me and harass me and I began to fear for the life of my pre-born daughter. It was through a few of my friends at that time of my life where they started to throw around the word "Abortion". They would say, "Just get an abortion" and I would start to think about it because I was already in such a mess in my life and I started to talk about it more with those friends. I started to believe the lies of the abortion industry that it was okay, that I would be fine, that I could just go home and move on with my life and that it was my body and my choice. I allowed myself to be lied to by people who did not want the best for me and my baby, and I began to think that having another abortion was the best choice.

Even though I had already had one abortion, I didn't know what to expect this time around. I assumed that I would walk in and they would give me some pills again and then I could go home. This time though, it was different and it would come to be the most traumatic experience of my life. On November 20th, 2015 I walked into Planned Parenthood in New Haven, Connecticut. I had made an appointment with them a few days earlier. I sat down and filled out some paperwork. They brought me into another waiting room where I just sat for awhile and then they brought me into the ultrasound room. I did not realize I would be having one, and again, I was not allowed to look at the screen and she turned the monitor off so I could not hear the heartbeat. It was just like it was a few months prior and everything within me wanted to get up and leave. Why wasn't this woman talking to me? Why wasn't she asking me if I was okay? Why wasn't she showing me the baby? I had so many questions but the room was eerily quiet and so I didn't say anything. She said that she could see the heartbeat, and that I was 14 weeks and 2 days along. After that, she brought me into another room where there were all of these hospital chairs and some beds and she had me change into a hospital gown. She

gave me a pill, which I took, but again no one explained what it was or what it would do. I sat in that chair for a few hours and started to feel abdominal pain. One of the nurses came in to get me and wheeled me into this small and dark room. She had me lay on this metal table and the doctor came in. There was a nurse by my right side of the table and it was so quiet. It felt lonely and I felt so scared, hopeless, helpless and afraid; all over again. The doctor performing the abortion told me to put my legs up and she began to perform the abortion. I laid there shaking on the table and crying. At that time, I didn't even know what was happening but I was so afraid and I wanted someone to say something but it was only the doctor communicating with the nurse. A few moments later, I asked the doctor where she was putting my baby. I asked her again, and she said "I am not able to tell you that." They helped me stand up and helped me back into the wheelchair into the recovery room. They gave me magazines and smiled at me and I felt disgusted and taken advantage of. Did they not know what was happening in there? Were they really okay with this? Why is no one coming to talk to me or help me? I felt so alone.

As soon as I was able to leave, I did and drove home. I fell into this place of numbing myself again. My whole life was a mess and I could not cope with what was going on anymore. I fell into a severe state of depression, I felt that I did not deserve to be a mom, or even to be alive. Knowing that I had just ended the lives of two babies through abortion haunted me.

I made it seem that I was okay on the outside because I wanted to be okay. I did not want to feel the pain anymore and I did not want to admit that I had two abortions. The months following the abortions, I became angry at what Planned Parenthood does and I was afraid to even go in the same cities as where the clinics were. It felt traumatizing to go back there. I did not feel that they cared for me, I did not feel that they had my best interests at hand. What I felt when I went to Planned Parenthood those two times was lied to, hurt, alone, scared, and that I was just another patient walking in and walking out; not a person, a person with real hurt and problems, a person facing a crisis pregnancy who really needed support and help.

It was not until four years later that I heard about a post-abortive healing program at a pregnancy center. I decided to take part in the 8 week class and it changed my life. It was during those 8 weeks that I saw on a deeper level just how much those two abortions affected every part of my life. My abortions had changed who I was as a person, a mom, a wife, a friend, a daughter and so much more, in a negative way. Once I walked through healing from my abortions, I became a person who was confident, whole, healed, free and I became strong again. I became a Mom who knew she was deserving of good, who was strong and whole and who could finally be who her kids needed her to be; all because I was finally able to process and walk through those abortions and get the healing that I so desperately needed.

Just three weeks ago, on February 12th, 2020 I walked back through the doors of Planned Parenthood in New Haven, Connecticut where I had my second abortion, which was a surgical abortion where the doctor suctioned my baby out and tore it limb by limb. I went there that day to obtain my medical records, including the ultrasound pictures that I was not allowed to see. I have those pictures with me for the hearing. They gave me my records, I signed off on

them and walked out. I sat in my car for 15 minutes before I could open up the folder. I read my medical records for the first time that day and it was so hard to read what had happened to my babies. I saw the ultrasound pictures, and even though they were fuzzy from being scanned over a few times, I saw my babies there.

Planned Parenthood does these ultrasounds for all these women that come in who are pregnant, and they see that the babies are alive and have a heartbeat, yet they are still killing these pre-born babies through abortion. How can we say that Planned Parenthood, or any other abortion clinic, is for the care of all women? How is performing an abortion care? How is it okay to not allow someone to see their ultrasound? I would say that they are aware that if they showed the ultrasound to that woman, that she would choose life after seeing her baby moving around and hearing the heartbeat. I looked at those ultrasound pictures, just three weeks ago for the first time, and held them close to my heart. Those pictures are all that I have of my two babies. I know that I chose abortion, but I had no idea what it really meant, what it was going to do to my babies, and what it would do to me. I am not the only one who has a story like this, there are hundreds of other women who have the same story. I have had many other women come to me saying the same thing happened to them at Planned Parenthood, and saying that even when they tried to get their records, somehow their records were “gone”.

Planned Parenthood is not for the care of women. They don't offer support and help. They don't listen and counsel you and help you choose life and walk through the pregnancy. They make you feel defeated and alone, by having abortion as an option. I love my state here in Connecticut and I do not want my tax paying money to go to the funding of abortions at these clinics. These millions of dollars could be used for the better of women and babies; to help pregnancy resource centers, to help provide housing for women and their children, to help provide housing on college campuses for girls that face unexpected pregnancies and want to still finish school. We need to be a state that stands for life, that walks with women through facing a crisis pregnancy, and a state that puts our money where it matters. Planned Parenthood can raise their own funds if they need the money, but I am not in support of having my money be apart of ending the lives of the pre-born. I hope that in sharing a personal part of my life with my story, that it can change your hearts and your minds. I want to see the very best for all women and their babies. I want to see our state standing for the things that matter and funding money to an abortion clinic is not the way.

Thank you for your time in reading this and I look forward to sharing my oral testimony regarding this bill.

Sincerely,
Erika Kapustinski